

Bulletin

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Working Holiday Maker Visas for Belgium

On 20 November 2002, the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Philip Ruddock, signed a new reciprocal Working Holiday Maker agreement between Australia and Belgium.

Once the treaty is ratified, Citizens of Belgium aged between 18 and 30 will be eligible to apply for Working Holiday visas and successful applicants will be eligible to stay in Australia for up to 12 months.

This will bring to 15 the number of reciprocal Working Holiday Maker visa arrangements. The others are Canada, the Republic of Ireland, Japan, Malta, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and Cyprus.

Under the program, visa holders may holiday in Australia for 12 months, but may also supplement their travel funds through incidental employment of not more than three months with any one employer.

Importantly, working holiday makers are permitted to work with the one employer for a maximum of 3 months. Changing locations with the same employer does not constitute a "change of employer". Visa holders who are employed by employment agencies must change to another employer (or agency) after three months with that agency - changing workplaces while being employed by the one employment agency does not constitute "change of employer".

If the immigration department becomes aware of a visa holder's breach of the visa condition regarding employment restriction, it will likely lead to visa cancellation and the visa holder's departure from Australia.

The Minister's media release can be found at:

http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media_releases/media02/r02100.htm

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